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LET'S EXPLORE

The PINE BARRENS

MOST motorists who have driven in or near the great South Jersey pine barrens (and most every one has approached them near Lakewood or Fort Dix) have wondered what lies in the still woods beyond. Few have ventured to find out—the twisting sandy roads leading into the forest hold no attraction.

There still is no easy way to study all of the Pine Barrens stretching over hundreds of square miles. However, a visit to Lebanon State Forest midway between Camden and Seaside Heights gives a capsule view of the barrens. Excellent roads (85 miles of them) wind through the 22,185-acre preserve, where the wanton destruction of the woods in the past is meeting head-on with the conservation measures of the future.

Lebanon Forest is an all-day trip, of course, although it can be easily reached in two hours from Newark by way of Freehold and the straight road running due southwest from Freehold to Mt. Holly. Facilities for picnicking and swimming are available in the forest so the trip accomplishes a double purpose—it offers a chance to see what the state is doing to reclaim the wasted pinelands and gives the family a pleasant outing.

About 23 miles from Freehold watch for signs to Wrightstown then follow the road around the great Fort Dix area to Brown's Mills. Turn right in Brown's Mills,



BY JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM

Guide Bucky Bush on sandy strip which once was part of main road to Barnegat.

followed by a left turn in New Lisbon on a macadam road to the forest headquarters six miles away on Route S-40. A stop at headquarters is urged to get fullest enjoyment from the trip because fire permits can be secured there and information can be gleaned about the accomplishments in the state forest.

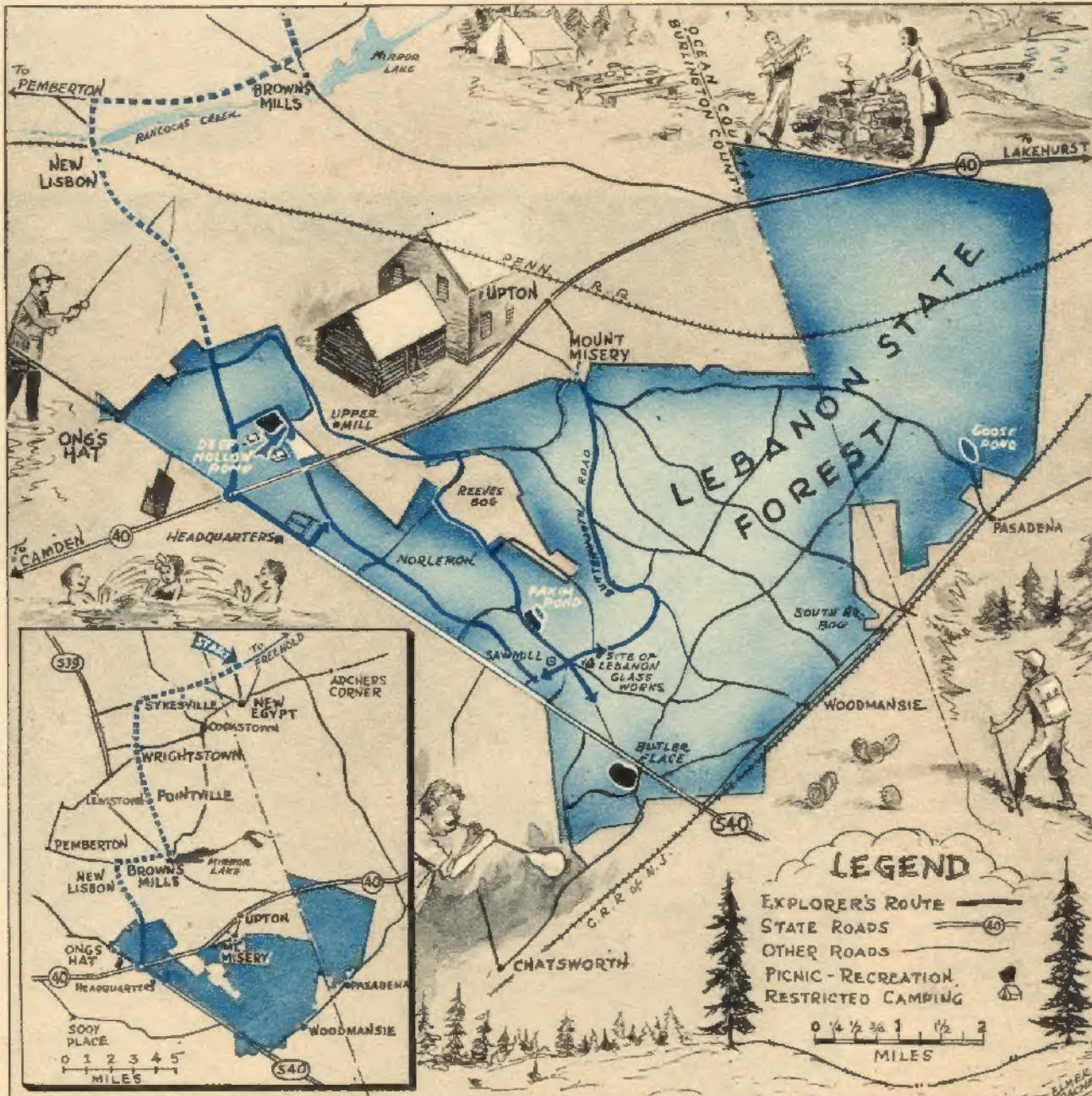
THE motorist can be left largely to his own devices to enjoy the great forest. The accompanying map and the dozens of directional markers

should keep him from getting lost for more than a few minutes. It's easy, nevertheless, to get the thrill of woodland solitude and the impression that this must have been a wearying place to travel up until 25 years ago. Many sandy roads swing away into the distance, lending an air of mystery even to this carefully-plotted state reservation.

J. P. Allen, Lebanon supervisor since 1928, suggests exploring the forest with Blanchard (Bucky) Bush, who has been at Lebanon since

1926. "I was born and raised five miles from here," Bucky grins. "My father came here soon after the State Forest was started in 1908."

Bucky urges a climb up the 80-foot steel fire tower near headquarters before driving out into the forest. Charley Parker, on duty in the tower seven days a week "unless it's raining," always welcomes visitors. He'll point out distant hills with such intriguing names as Arney's Mount and Apple Pie Hill. Below the tower a vast forest stretches



Excellent roads winding through forest give motorist capsule tour of barrens.



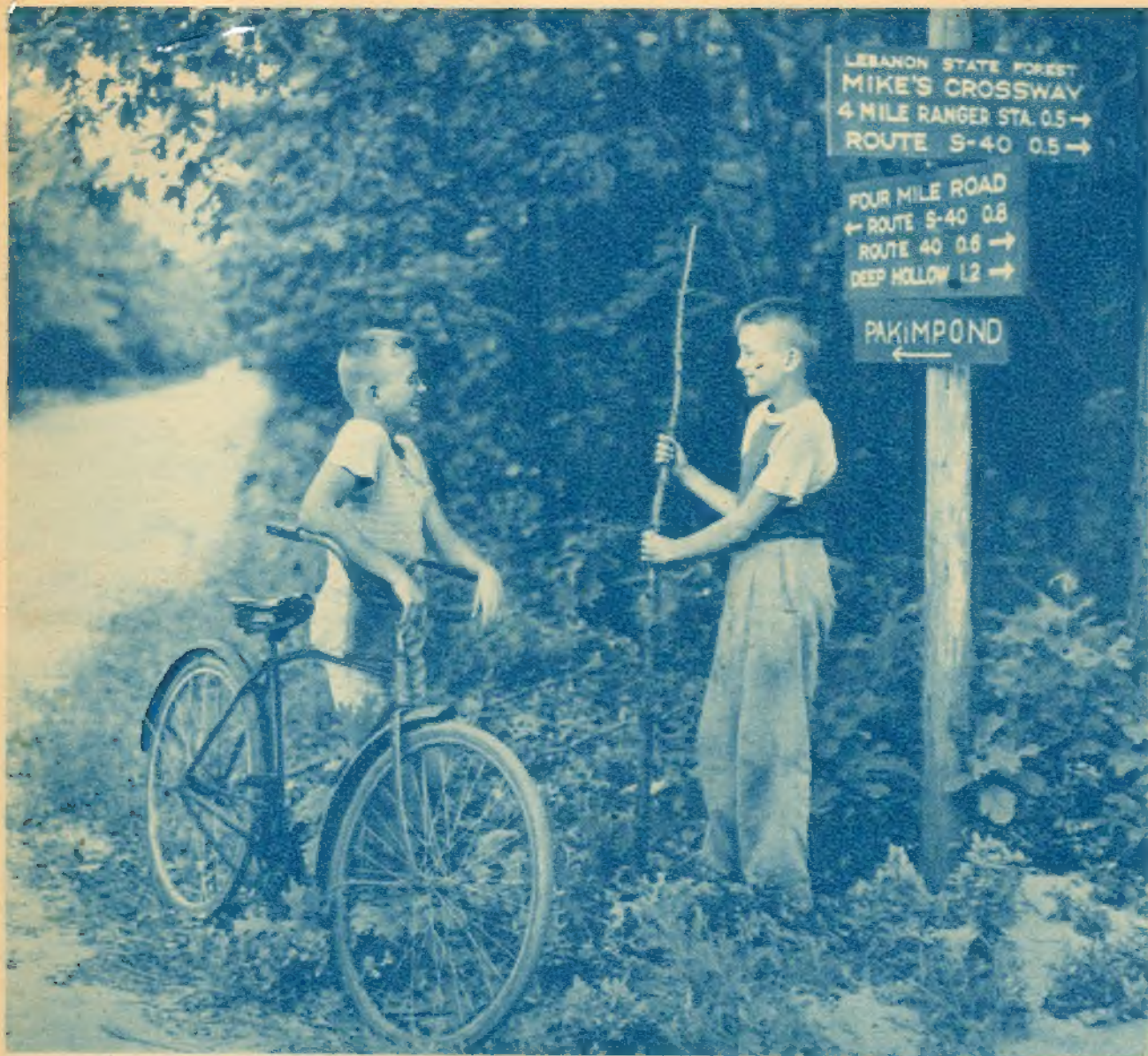
Supervisor J. P. Allen in front of forest headquarters on Route S-40.

in every direction, broken only by occasional cranberry bogs or the highways.

Back on the ground Bucky suggests going out to Deep Hollow Pond area out near New Lisbon road. The visitor will be highly interested in the road signs along the way, bearing such inscriptions as "Mike's Crossway." That name came from Mike Mingen who "built that road over to Reeve's Bogs, when I was a kid," says Bucky.

CAMP sites are on the east side of Deep Hollow Pond and a large picnic grove is on the opposite bank. The pond is merely a deep pit where water runoffs are carefully stored against possible forest fires.

AUGUST 20, 1950



Frequent signposts like this make it virtually impossible to be lost in woods.

Swimming is allowed at times during the year if enough water has accumulated to keep the pond moving but much better swimming is found in Pakim Pond out near the eastern part of the forest in the vicinity of the sawmill.

Bucky invites you to Upper Mill, to the north of Route 40, to see a log cabin built in 1720. The cabin is to the right of the hard gravel road and now forms the western wing of a much larger building. However, the original cabin can still readily be seen although a shining new metal roof dispels some of the 230-year-old aura.

Close by the cabin small patches of cactus are growing beside a plant which Bush calls "thread and needle" because of the wisps growing from the pointed leaves. The forest abounds in unusual plants and is visited con-

stantly by botanists for study. The great diversity of plant-life also gives the less scientifically-minded ever-changing color in the woods as different species come into flower.

The road back to the sawmill and the site of the long-abandoned Lebanon Glass Works passes attractive Pakim Pond where complete swimming and picnicking facilities are offered. As the road goes through the forest you notice that actually pines are only a fraction of the trees along the way. Bucky says that many types of trees grow in the "Pine Barrens," including pitch and short leaf pines, many scrub oaks as well as white, black and chestnut oaks and Southern white cedar.

SOUTHERN white cedar, the most valuable timber in

the forest, grows in very dense, crowded stands in the swamps. Sometimes as many as 4,000 trees grow in a single acre, necessitating constant thinning. Supervisor Allen estimates that it takes 60 to 80 years to grow one of the cedars to lumber size.

The small state-operated sawmill cuts forest timber into varied wood products for maintenance of forest buildings. Nearby is the old Lebanon Glass Works site, from which the forest derived its name. The glass works was opened in 1851 to take advantage of the suitable sand and plentiful wood supply but was closed 16 years later when the wood gave out. That typical unthinking use of the forest is largely to blame for today's Pine Barrens.

The state now is reclaiming
(Continued on Following Page)



Ranger Charley Parker (inset) and view from forest tower near Highway S-40.

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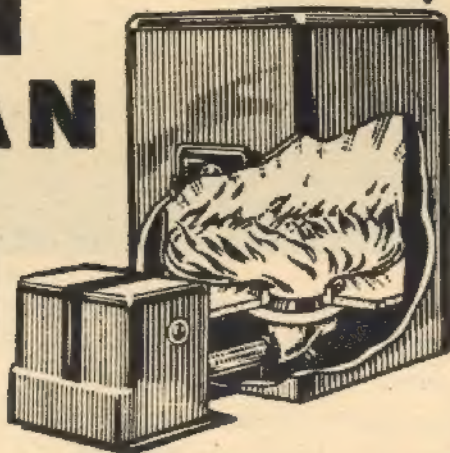
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LET'S EXPLORE—Jersey's Pine Barrens



Spring-fed Pakim Pond (above) has complete swimming and picknicking facilities while bathing at Deep Hollow (below) is suitable only when reservoir is full.



(Cont'd from Preceding Page)
the Lebanon area through planned plantings and trimmings and up-to-date forest fire fighting methods. Although the motorist enjoys the roads for the ease with which they enable him to see the forest the network of roads serves a greater purpose. Not only are they fire breaks but they also permit

modern equipment quickly to roll to fire-stricken areas. There hasn't been a serious forest fire in Lebanon forest in 20 years.

Supervisor Allen credits the Civilian Conservation Corps with much of the development of the forest, pointing out that the CCC improved the roads and built the recreation areas. Near the sawmill a

narrow sandy road is an indication of what things were like before the CCC came.

"I remember walking that road as a kid," Bucky says. "It was the only road from here to Barnegat and when I got my first 1917 Ford I couldn't drive over it. Why, 20 years ago State Troopers had to use horses in here. That's when things were really rough."



Application for use of a state-owned cabin (above) can be made by writing to the supervisor. Below: Typical scene in one of Lebanon's three picnic groves.

